

### Remarks

Further and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

The purpose of the present amendment is to place the application in condition for allowance, considering that the Examiner has indicated that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, as a result of which claim 2 has been cancelled.

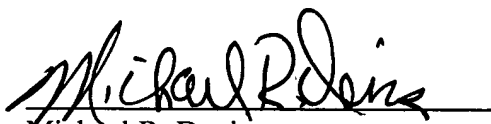
Claim 3 has also been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, and has been further clarified, in the same manner that claim 1 was previously clarified, to indicate that it is the rubber composition which has the recited density. With further regard to this clarification, please see the fourth paragraph of the Remarks on page 5 of the Amendment filed January 2, 2004.

The rejection of claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) or 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Berejka et al., as well as the objection to claim 2, have been rendered moot in view of the claim amendments.

Accordingly, the application is now considered to be in condition for allowance. Such allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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